

HISTORIC + CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN TEMPE

Tempe is a unique and vibrant community that embraces its past while looking toward its future. Historic preservation is a vital tool in this effort to identify and retain Tempe's distinctive character. The Tempe Historic Preservation Office works to ensure that our significant historic and cultural resources – whether a prehistoric archaeological site, a Territorial era adobe building, or our 1970 glass-and-steel inverted pyramid Tempe Municipal Building – receive due consideration in the planning and development process.

PRESERVATION GOALS

Historic preservation contributes to a number of goals identified as important to Tempeans. In addition to maintaining a varied architectural environment that is often imitated but never replicated, historic preservation supports sustainability by encouraging the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings, assists economic development efforts by retaining a sense of place valued by employers and potential new residents, and promotes tourism by highlighting the diverse range of historic and cultural resources found in Tempe.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION + STABILIZATION

Preservation of our historic neighborhoods is a key priority of the Tempe Historic Preservation Office. Far from merely recognizing the stately homes of affluent early residents, our historic preservation program has reinforced a strong sense of community in neighborhoods spanning from the early-twentieth-century homes of Maple-Ash to the mid-to-late 1950s homes of Date Palm Manor. Historic designation, whether applied to an individual home or an entire neighborhood, has been shown to be of great value to all citizens – not just those residing in historic homes. Multiple studies indicate a positive correlation between historic designation and owner occupancy rates, increased property values, reduced calls for police service, and a stronger sense of identity. Neighborhood design guidelines, developed in conjunction with residents of historic districts following listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register, serve as a roadmap for maintaining a neighborhood's historic aesthetic. Historic Preservation Commission review of proposals to alter or redevelop designated homes assures that changes are carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the important character defining features identified by residents. These protections, which do not change a property's underlying zoning or otherwise impact private property rights, allow for the preservation and stabilization of Tempe's many historic neighborhoods.

HISTORIC AREA CONTEXT

The **Western Canal** and **Tempe Canal** bookend this planning area, cluing us in to its agricultural past. Early settlers and archaeologists noted evidence of **Hohokam** canals running through this area, indicating prehistoric usage of **Salt River** water to bring its fertile soil to life. Late nineteenth-century farmers found the land ideal for growing long staple cotton and dates, in-demand crops that brought great wealth to many in the Valley. In the mid-twentieth-century, bulldozers replaced tractors as the area transitioned from farms to homes – many of which were constructed in developments given botanically-inspired names and watered using the irrigation infrastructure once used to grow cotton and dates.

Although the area has undergone tremendous change within the span of the last century, it remains firmly tied to its past. Evidence of prehistoric civilizations, largely hidden, still exists underground. The *Tempe Historic Property Register* and National Register-listed **D. J. Frankenberg**, as well as the National Register-listed and Historic Eligible **Morrow-Hudson House** – both old farmhouses – serve as visual reminders of the area's late nineteenth and early twentieth-century agricultural roots. **Date Palm Manor**, a 1950s *Tempe Historic Property Register*-listed subdivision, boasts stately rows of date palms that once yielded a sizeable commercial crop. **Shalimar's** homes and lush golf course sit on a former cotton field, as does the **Hughes Acres** development, a Tempe Cultural Resource Area. Mid-century homebuilders maintained the area's longstanding bucolic aesthetic by erecting well-landscaped homes in subdivisions with names such as **Tempe Gardens**, **Evergreen**, **Southern Palms**, **Tempe Palms**, and **Alameda Meadows**.

Today, a handful of farmhouses still stand proudly within a vibrant and verdant community. The nearby canals and irrigation pipes once used to coax fertility from the dry desert now water the lawns and mature vegetation that define the area. The area's many schools and parks nurture its crop of children, while U. S. 60 and Loop 101 now export its labor force to points elsewhere, just as the rail line that defines the area's northern boundary once carried its harvest to market.

